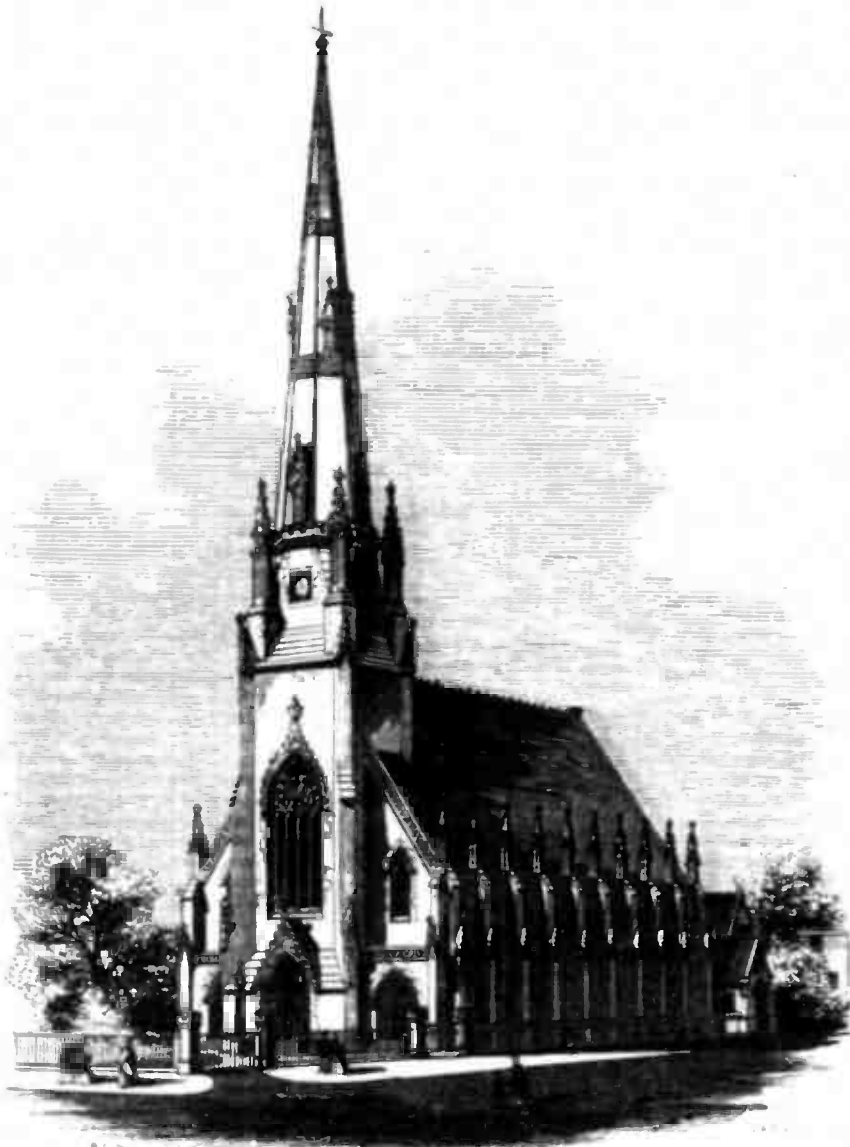


CLAPHAM CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.—MR. TARRING, ARCHITECT.



CLAPHAM CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.

CLAPHAM now boasts of two lofty spires, neither of which belongs to the "establishment." One is the "Church of our immaculate Lady of Victories" (its title tells to which party it belongs), a very clever work, with some well-executed carvings; the other is the new Congregational Church, opened a few weeks ago, and of which we now give a view. Until very recently Dissenters would not permit any architectural display in their places of worship, and this building must not therefore be tried by comparison with new parish churches, but with those which have been erected for Christians of the same denomination, viewed in which way, it is entitled to considerable commendation. The style of architecture adopted is Gothic, of the decorated period. The walls are built with Kentish Rag and Bath stone on the exterior, and bricks on the interior, finished with stucco.

The pew framing on the ground floor, and the gallery front (a large gallery runs all round), are of oak, with carved ends to the pews, and open work in the gallery front.

The pulpit and staircase, and the communion enclosure are all of carved oak, too, of an appropriate design.

The apse at the end is occupied as a deacon's room, being divided from the church by a screen surmounted by the organ gallery, which

is fitted with an organ built by Grey and Davison. The roof is partly open.

The windows in the west end are filled with stained glass, by Ward and Nixon: in the large centre window are full-length figures of the four Evangelists, and in the two small windows are representations of Christ blessing little children, and the miracle of turning water into wine, at Cana of Galilee. These are the dimensions of the building:—Inside height, 113 feet; width, 48 feet; height from floor to ceiling, 44 feet; outside length, 123 feet; width, including buttresses, 57 feet; height of side walls to top of parapet, 30 feet 6 inches; height to top of finials, 41 feet; height of tower to base of spire, 83 feet 6 inches; spire, 87 feet 6 inches; vane, 7 feet; the total height, 178 feet.

At the back of the church are minister's and deacon's rooms, waiting-room, and side entrance porch, and an evening chapel for evening services and meetings, 50 feet long and 20 feet wide. The whole is warmed by hot water, the apparatus for which has been supplied by Mr. Hall, under the direction of Mr. Joshua Field. The church is lighted by two large chandeliers, and brackets under the galleries, and the evening chapel by two smaller chandeliers, executed by Mr. Rothwell.

The ground is enclosed by iron railing and

gates, with large stone piers, which are not so satisfactory as some parts of the building.

On the corbels of the external doors are sculptured the heads of Luther, Calvin, Howe, Owen, Baxter, and Bunyan.

The works have been executed by Mr. Myers, builder, from the designs of Mr. John Tarring, architect.

The total cost will be nearly 8,000*l.* and there are seats, it is said, for 1,100 persons.

Some of our readers may perhaps inquire what is a "Congregational Church." The Congregational Union is founded on what is considered the scriptural right of every separate church to maintain perfect independence in the government and administration of its own particular affairs. The objects contemplated in its formation are—quoting the "Protestant Dissenters' Almanack,"—

"1. To promote evangelical religion, in connection with the congregational denomination.

2. To cultivate brotherly affection and sincere co-operation in everything relating to the interests of the associated churches.

3. To establish fraternal correspondence with congregational churches, and other bodies of Christians throughout the world.

4. To address an annual or occasional letter to the associated churches, with such information as may be deemed necessary.